
PRINCIPAL GRANT'S LETTERS

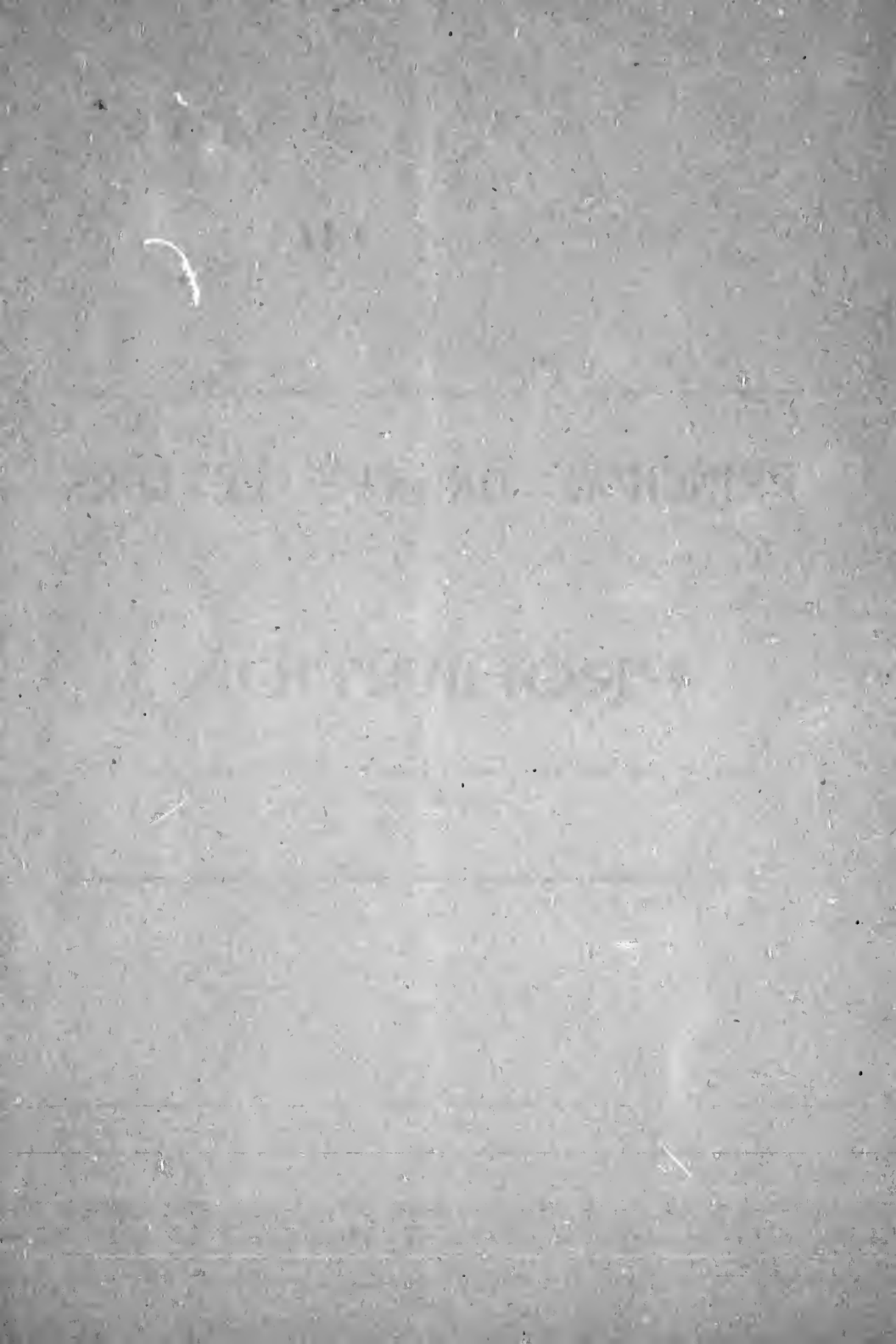
ON

PROHIBITION

As they appeared in the Toronto Daily "Globe," December, 1897,
January, 1898.

*on Edmund Walker
1913*

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PRINCIPAL GRANT'S FIRST LETTER,

In which he introduces the subject, and concludes with the statement that he finds it his duty to vote against Prohibition.

(Special Correspondence of The Globe.)

The Government of Canada has promised that the mind of the people regarding the prohibiting the importation, manufacture and sale of intoxicants shall be ascertained by means of a plebiscite. Parliament will probably be asked at its next session to provide means for taking the vote. If a majority vote yea, the Government will be under a moral obligation to introduce the necessary legislation to give effect to the vote; for even though the popular will shall have been ascertained in an extra-constitutional way, the Government, by adopting the plebiscite, incurs the responsibility of accepting the verdict and giving it the force of law.

And yet it has not been stated officially whether the question shall simply be, "Are you in favor of prohibition?" or whether we shall also be asked as to our willingness to bear our share of the direct taxation which the change may involve.

Neither has it been stated as yet whether a majority of those actually voting, or a majority of the whole electorate, shall be considered by the Government to be an adequate expression of the popular will. But, once the principle of the plebiscite has been accepted, both of these points are of minor importance, though I have no wish to belittle either of them.

The matter of transcendent importance is that the Government has promised, in accordance with the programme adopted at the Liberal Convention of 1893, to submit to direct vote a question involving not only great commercial, manufacturing and industrial interests, but also popular habits and tastes and public morality. The Premier must have thought well before giving the promise. He must have come to the conclusion that there was something unworthy of statesmen in paltering longer with a question which had agitated the public for many years, and had been staved off by glittering unrealities. He must have decided that to deal straightforwardly with it and to throw upon the whole people the responsibility of giving a decision was wiser, and certainly more moral,

than to try and humbug *sincere* advocates of prohibition with subterfuges or vague promises.

TIME TO CONSIDER OUR DUTY.

Unquestionably he has taken a great risk; but if his doing so springs from trust in the good sense of the people, as we have a right to suppose, it is high time for us to consider our duty in the premises with all seriousness and calmness. So far as I know, the proposal to enforce prohibition has never yet been submitted by a Government to the votes of any nation in the world. Municipalities, counties, Provinces, States have voted for and have actually tried prohibition; but for a Dominion scattered over half a continent to try it, especially with a boundary line of thousands of miles, on the other side of which it is lawful to import, manufacture and sell, is an experiment that one is tempted to term quixotic.

And yet, judging by the results of votes which have been taken in Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, the people seem ready to try the experiment. True, a number of electors, not favorable to prohibition, but who dislike the liquor traffic and sympathize with the moral fervor of many who are fighting against it, declined to go to the polls. But this class may take the same attitude when a Dominion prohibitory law is proposed.

Though a sane, we are a young people, and therefore not disinclined to try a big experiment. We feel, with ill-founded confidence, that should it fail it will be quite easy for us to go back to the former state of things, just as in 1884 the Scott Act, carried in nearly the whole of Ontario, was in a few years repealed by majorities larger than those by which it had been carried.

Is this the reason why the great organs of public opinion have as yet said little or nothing on the subject? Or is it because party interests or their own circulation would suffer if they took a decided stand against prohibition? If the former be the reason, they have not considered how much more is involved in Dominion than in local legislation. If the latter, only those who are willing themselves to risk something have the right to blame them. Clergymen in active work are not free to take any side but one on this question, and therefore silence on their part is legitimate. There is hardly one who has not in his congregation parishioners who have suffered, directly or indirectly, because of drunkenness, and to these even a Scriptural argument against prohibition seems a plea for drunkenness or a refusal to put a stop to its ravages. When that comes from their own minister it seems to them like a blow from the sanctuary. The average politician has also good reason for keeping silence. He well knows how intensely some of his friends and some of his foes feel on the subject. It is not for him to give offence to the one class and aid and comfort to the other.

But there are men in Canada—employers of labor, mechanics trusted by their fellows, educational authorities, students of history and sociology, literary men, and others—competent and also free to speak out on this great public, non-party and moral question. With submission it seems to me that it is their duty to do so now, and as no man has a right to ask others when he himself is unwilling to give or do, according to the measure of his ability, I propose to offer a contribution to the discussion.

After long and earnest consideration I have come to the conclusion that a Dominion prohibitory law would be hurtful to the cause of temperance and most hurtful to general public and private morality. Believing this, it is surely my duty to go to the polls and to vote "No" to the question "Are you in favor of prohibition?"

In another communication I shall give some of the reasons that have led me to this conclusion.

Kingston, December 4, 1897.

G. M. GRANT.

PRINCIPAL GRANT'S SECOND LETTER.

Dealing with the Experiment of Prohibition in Maine, and its Results, and also with the Failure of the Scott Act in Ontario.

(Special Correspondence of The Globe.)

The people of Canada, as compared with all other Christian nations, are singularly abstemious. In making comparisons I must confine myself to Christendom, for Mahomet and Gantama, the Buddha—unlike Jesus—absolutely prohibited the use of intoxicating liquors. Every good Mahomedan and Buddhist is therefore a pledged abstainer; but, though we are sometimes promised the millennium under a regime of prohibition, no millennium has come yet in Turkey or Armenia, nor where Buddhism has been supreme for more than a thousand years.

The sobriety of the people of Canada is admitted. Mr. Spence recently stated that the consumption of alcoholic liquors per head in the United States averages 17 gallons a year and in Canada $4\frac{1}{2}$ gallons. What makes this state of things the more remarkable is that, as a rule, northern peoples drink more than those to the south of them, and also that the United States has been the great home and happy hunting ground of prohibition for half a century. It seems to me that if the conditions of the two countries were reversed, I would be ashamed to go to our sober neighbors and lecture them on their duty in the matter of temperance. I might be offered a good fee per night for my services, but shame itself would make me confine my efforts to my own distressful country, even if it were not evident to a self-respecting man that each people can best paddle its own canoe in its own waters.

CANADA IS TEMPERATE.

What has led to our comparatively happy condition of things? A great variety of causes—the healthy, religious sentiment of the people which responds to every sane appeal with regard to admitted evils, an improved public opinion regarding drunkenness, tippling, treating and the use socially of wine or spirits; better food, lodging and clothing for the masses; more refined amusements for all; better cooking; better sanitation; these and other causes have combined with the earnest efforts of temperance reformers to bring about the happy result. We have been

winning in the fight for temperance for 50 years, as everyone will admit who knows what the social customs were 50, or even 10 or 20, years ago. The victory is not yet completely won, but why in the name of common sense should we throw away the well-tried swords which have served us so well for the rusty razors of prohibition and constant political fighting to secure new amendments to meet ever new evasions of coercive laws?

We have already had trials, in different Provinces, of county prohibition, and the results, from a temperance point of view, are not encouraging. For instance, in Ontario, from 1885 to 1889, the Scott Act years, the convictions for drunkenness averaged annually 6,243. In 1889 the convictions were 7,059. On the other hand, in 1894, when we were free from the Scott Act, the convictions were only 3,267. I understand that there were still fewer convictions in 1895 and 1896, but I have not been able to get official returns for those years.

PROHIBITION IN MAINE.

The State of Maine, however, affords a much better illustration of what prohibition can and cannot do than any of our Provinces, and it, besides, is the place to which prohibitionists point with greatest confidence. During the early part of the century Maine was, perhaps, the most drunken State in the Union. A recoil, essentially religious in its origin, began in 1806, which reached its climax in the course of the next 15 years. Total abstinence became a popular enthusiasm all over the State. As early as 1831 the official year-book of the State said that "the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in Maine has been reduced two-thirds within three years." The idea of prohibition never entered the minds of those early reformers. The Washingtonian movement, whose achievements in suppressing intemperance were enthusiastically celebrated in popular songs, reached Maine in 1840, but neither did it dream of prohibition. As one of the leaders said in 1841: "Washingtonians are firm believers in the efficacy and power of moral suasion; this they believe to be the main lever; they hold that doctrine to be unsound which includes the principle of coercion, and therefore they cannot go hand in hand with those who cry out 'give us the strong arm of the law.'" Human nature, however, is impatient, and success is apt to make it intolerant. It loves short cuts.

Maine enacted a prohibitory law in 1846. What has been the result? In the half century that has since elapsed 50 amendments have been called for to meet the evasions and the difficulties attending attempts at enforcing the law! Just as men who have drunk too much are thirsty and cry "more brandy," so the Maine prohibitionists have never ceased to cry for "more law."

Let me refer all who are interested in a study of the Maine liquor laws, and indeed of the whole question, to an admirable volume entitled "The Liquor Problem in its Legislative Aspects," which gives the results of a careful, thorough and impartial investigation, under the direction of the most eminent educational and social reformers in the United States. This enables fair-minded men to form conclusions regarding what prohibition can, and what it cannot, do.

EVASION OF THE LAW.

Prohibition can abolish the manufacture on a large scale of distilled, fermented and malt liquors within the area covered by the law. Whether it is moral to abolish factories in which men have invested their property, and which have grown up under the law, without offering the slightest compensation to those whose property is destroyed by law, is another question. But no one pretends that prohibition can abolish illicit manufacture; and illicit stills always turn out the strongest and most poisonous liquors. In Maine, the "hard" liquor usually sold produces forms of intemperance most injurious to health and life. It is difficult to obtain malt liquors on account of their bulk. "The stricter the enforcement the poorer the liquor," which is often nothing but alcohol purchased from druggists and sold after dilution under the name of "split."

Prohibition can prevent the open importation of wine, beer or spirits. It cannot prevent smuggling, which, even without prohibition, flourishes at present along the Lower St. Lawrence with increasing vigor, according to the increase of the tariff or of licenses. Sir Richard Cartwright stated at the last session of Parliament that the loss to the revenue from this smuggling was \$800,000 a year, and that it was demoralizing the people of whole parishes. It would be impossible, he said, to bring guilt home to the principals without the aid of informers. The Government got a vote to pay informers, but very little has been done. The long, unsettled coasts of the gulf afford the smugglers too many facilities. The recent increase in duties has also led to an extensive illicit manufacture of alcohol in the country. What would happen under a Dominion prohibition law? Smuggling and illicit distilling would abound more and more in spite of armies of informers.

Prohibition can remove open temptation from the young and from persons disposed to alcoholic excess. It is practically helpless against "dives," "pocket-peddlers" and all the well-known variety of secret temptation which have such a fascination for the young. "Stolen waters are sweet." Still less can it subdue that desire for some stimulant which is all but universal in human nature, and which, when ordinary means of gratification are denied, finds relief in opium, morphine, chloral and drugs and drinks of various kinds more pernicious to the constitution than even whiskey.

COLLUSIVE SELLING.

Prohibition can prevent the open sale of intoxicants, though as long as druggists or other agents are allowed to sell for medicinal, mechanical or sacramental uses, or for use in the arts, it is extremely difficult to distinguish one class of buyers from another. But it can do nothing towards subduing the natural resistance of the human, and especially of the British heart, to restrictive legislation, which is an infringement on personal liberty.

"It is only in regions where prohibition prevails that illicit selling assumes large proportions." (See the report signed by President Eliot of Harvard, President Low of Columbia, and James C. Carter of New York.)

Now while, according to these eminent authorities, "the most minute and painstaking legislation has failed to attain the object of the prohibitionists," let me quote a few sentences from their terrible arraignment of "concomitant evils of prohibitory legislation in Maine."

CONCOMITANT EVILS.

"The efforts to enforce it during 40 years past have had some unlooked-for effects on public respect for courts, judicial procedure, oaths and law in general, and for officers of the law, legislators and public servants. The public have seen law defied, a whole generation of habitual law-breakers schooled in evasion and shamelessness, courts ineffective through fluctuations of policy, delays, perjuries, negligences and other miscarriages of justice, officers of the law double-faced and mercenary, legislators timid and insincere, candidates for office hypocritical and truckling, and office-holders unfaithful to pledges and to reasonable public expectation.

The liquor traffic, being very profitable, has been able, when attacked by prohibitory legislation, to pay fines, bribes, hush-money and assessments for political purposes to large amounts. This money has tended to corrupt the lower courts, the police administration, political organizations and even the electorate itself. . . . Frequent yielding to this temptation causes general degeneration in public life, breeds contempt for the public service, and, of course, makes the service less desirable for upright men. . . . All legislation intended to put restrictions on the liquor traffic, except, perhaps, the simple tax, is more or less liable to these objections; but the prohibitory legislation is the worst of all in these respects, because it stimulates to the utmost the resistance of the liquor dealers and their supporters."

Who would not rather have even the drinking customs as they were 50 years ago in Ontario than such a horrible state of things corrupting society at its fountain heads? Fortunately, however, we are not called upon to choose between the two evils. We can continue to improve without attempting dangerous experiments on so delicate and complicated an organism as modern society.

GEORGE M. GRANT.

Kingston, December 4th, 1897.

PRINCIPAL GRANT'S THIRD LETTER.

Showing that Prohibition has been a failure wherever tried, and that rank hypocrisy results from this method of dealing with Intemperance.

(Special Correspondence of The Globe.)

The fact that, in 1884, a prohibitory amendment was added to the constitution of Maine, and that in 1890 a proposal to repeal the amendment was emphatically voted down, is often given as sufficient answer to the evidence that prohibition does not prohibit. But no one doubts that a large majority of the people were enthusiastic abstainers before

1846; and the temperance organizations once converted to prohibition have continued to fight it out on that line ever since. In this, as in the case of Mahomet, Carlyle's question is the crucial one—"How did he get his sword?" By moral means; but, alas! having gotten it thus, he had not sufficient faith in humanity or in his message to trust to spiritual force. He fell back on coercion, and his successors have rested on it ever since. As we Christians have again and again manifested similar lack of faith, we must not be too hard on Mahomet; but there is no need for us to continue imitating him.

MADE A PARTY QUESTION.

The question of prohibition in Maine soon became a party one, and so it has remained. In 1884 the constitutional amendment was adopted by the Republicans, the country was on the eve of a Presidential election, and men, many of whom hated the measure, had to pay the price for prohibitionist support. Yet the total vote was very small. In 1890 repeal would have been equivalent to declaring the failure of Republican policy in the State, and that admission the leaders of the dominant party could not afford. Here we can see a great evil that has resulted from prohibition. A movement which began on a lofty moral plane has become merely the football of partisan politics. The trained investigators already quoted give the following evidence:—"Men in sympathy with the aim of prohibition complain that temperance work, which formerly reached the masses, has degenerated into meetings for political purposes, or that the agitation for abstinence has become a cry for police and detective methods. The identification of great temperance organizations with party politics has crippled their influence as popular moral agents, however much it may have aided the election of officials chosen for prohibitory purposes." Dealing with this point of the relation of politics to prohibition, the writers point out its baleful effects:—"Men assume a friendly attitude towards the law in which they disbelieve. The question of enforcement depends mainly on political exigencies, which again depend on the state of public opinion. A full-blown hypocrisy must result from this method of dealing with prohibition. Nowhere is it so blatant as in the Legislative halls, where men lend their votes in support of restrictive measures of which they not only disapprove, but violate openly, and even grossly. The corrupting influence of a large social element thriving in defiance of all law needs no further elucidation; bribery, perjury, and official dishonor follow it."

ENDED IN FAILURE.

What a sorry ending for a noble crusade! Is not such a state of things, in public and private life, infinitely more odious in the sight of God and man than if there was as much drinking in the State of Maine as there is, say, in England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden or even in Canada? But there is no need of argument on the point at issue. Prohibitionists admit frankly that in Maine the law does not prohibit. On this I submit, not my own testimony, or the testimony of friends, or of the correspondents of New York papers who have recently attended conventions, or other gatherings in the principal cities, but simply the

following statement from the platform of the prohibitionists of the State met in convention at Waterville on April 30, 1896:—

“ We declare that the State of Maine presents a condition of carelessness that disgraces its civilization, that nullification of the liquor law is widespread and open, that whole communities are compelled to consent to a shameless, illegal traffic, that country officials work the law for purposes of revenue, and that long continued familiarity with illegal rum-selling has begotten, in a considerable number of citizens, a disrespect of the authority of the law in general.”

More of the same could be given, but this is enough. Good men are not going to work hard to serve such ends.

ONTARIO AND MAINE COMPARED.

It is admitted that prohibition does prevent high-minded, nervous, sensitive and other people from getting whiskey, wine, or beer, even though they believe that it is required for their health. These classes will not stoop to the degradation of breaking the law or frequenting the purlieus to which the traffic betakes itself. But, feeling the need of tonics or stimulants, they get them legally and at an awful cost to brain and nerve. Here is a table which tells a tale. The population of Maine is 670,000, of Ontario about 2,200,000. The number of insane persons to the thousand is pretty much the same in the State and the Province, but as regards idiots what do the statistics say?

	Maine, 1896.	Ontario, 1896.
Number of idiots.....	1,591	605
Number of deaf and dumb.....	627	310
Number of blind.....	672	141

How does it happen that a fine State like Maine, with a vigorous, homogeneous population, chiefly agricultural, lumbering and seafaring, has eight or nine times as many idiots to the thousand as Ontario? The cause is said to be that people have betaken themselves to alcoholized patent medicines and other kinds of pernicious stimulants. From the character of the drunkenness I have seen in Maine, the dull, bemused faces and idiotic stare, and from what has been told me of the use of morphine in districts formerly under the Scott Act in Canada, I believe that this is one of the causes. Other features of the physical and religious condition of the people might be referred to, but it is sufficient to touch on direct and admitted results.

Prohibition, then, has been morally a failure, even when applied only to a homogeneous Province or State, with a strong public opinion in favor of the law. What would happen if the experiment were tried on the mingled races not yet fused into racial or national unity scattered over the vast areas of the Dominion of Canada? Little reflection is needed to convince us that its failure would be more certain and more disastrous.

INAPPLICABLE IN CITIES.

It is admitted that prohibition requires for its success a vigorous public opinion in its favor. Its advocates should therefore insist on securing a positive majority of the electorate before calling for the enactment of the law. That is not their usual attitude. It is also admitted that the law fails most conspicuously in large centres of population. Consequently, Massachusetts after trying prohibition for several years gave it up in 1874. During the latter years of the trial no serious attempts were made to enforce the law in cities like Boston, in spite of the strong Puritan element in them and the resolute Republican spirit which feels that toleration of disobedience to law is a disgrace to the commonwealth. But when the epithets "rum-ruled" and "rum-ridden" are to this day applied by the prohibitionists themselves to small cities like Portland, Lewiston and Bangor, what chance would there be of enforcing prohibition in Montreal, Toronto, Quebec and other Canadian cities?

PROVINCIAL COERCION.

Again, it is generally admitted that the Provinces of Quebec and British Columbia will vote against prohibition. Are we going to coerce whole Provinces or deprive them of the Provincial and municipal revenues which come from the liquor traffic? Let us not forget that those two Provinces and the Yukon Territory are peculiarly open to the operations of smugglers and illicit manufacturers. We are having a taste of this fact, even under a license system, as has been shown. But general public opinion now is against the smuggler. Then it would be on his side. What chance would there be of enforcing a prohibitory law in the mining camps and cities of British Columbia or along the creeks that run into the Yukon? This great river of Alaska is the open road all the way from St. Michael's in the United States up to Dawson and to other "cities" that will spring into existence, like Jonah's gourd and flit from place to place with their inhabitants, leaving as little trace as the tents of the Arabs. Along this broad, open summer roadway supplies will be sent up. Of what the demand for whiskey is likely to be anyone who knows placer pioneers can tell us. To these adventurers a drink is as necessary as a smoke, and if we are going to stop their grog we had better begin to enlist an army at once and turn the whole Mounted Police force into detectives. Then we might be able to substitute "split" for more wholesome or less poisonous liquors, but that would be all. The flow of bad whiskey could be no more stopped than the flow of the Yukon.

FRONTIER DIFFICULTIES.

Again, let us not forget this outstanding fact of our geographical position, that our frontier marches with the United States for thousands of miles. To illustrate what this would mean under a Dominion prohibitory law, let a thoughtful business man, of well-known temperance sympathies, in any one of our border towns, write a letter to The Globe dealing with the one point of the probable results there and in the town on the other side of the river or boundary line. What would be the result in Sarnia, for instance, and in Port Huron? One thing is

certain, that the hearts of the liquor-sellers and of merchants generally in Port Huron would be made glad.

We may assume, then, that the law would be a failure in the Provinces and Territories specified, in our large cities and along the border, and wherever public opinion was not in its favor. Experience shows that the local authorities would decline to enforce it, and if a Dominion Constabulary were appointed nothing certain would be gained in the end, save enormously increased expense.

To discredit local self-government in a vain attempt to defeat the will of the people of a Province would be a fine achievement for any Government, Liberal or Conservative! The penalty might be raised from fines to imprisonment, but all experience shows that it is then impossible to obtain convictions in liquor cases. The moral is so obvious that it need not be drawn.

RESPECT FOR LAW.

Could the law stand under all the obloquy certain to be heaped upon it in our great centres, to begin with? At present Canada is honorably distinguished by the respect for law shown in all its borders. Miners from the United States feel from the first that the tone in this respect is different from what they have been accustomed to and they conform readily to ours, at any rate, after their first contact with Canadian law, dressed in the garb of policeman or judge. Do not let us strain to the breaking point the traditional respect of our own people for the law. That is the result of centuries of training, and once broken it will not be restored in our day. It is like a woman's honor, too sacred to be trifled with.

I have abstained from speaking of the millions of revenue sacrificed by prohibition, of the cost of enforcement, or of the tens of millions worth of property virtually destroyed, because others can deal better with this side of the subject, and it is well sometimes to keep discussions on a higher plane than that of finance. Financial considerations cannot indeed be disregarded, and those who make light of the summary destruction of the property and industries of others ought at least to give a thought to the intense hatreds sure to be engendered in the minds of hundreds ruined and thousands thrown out of work. These sufferers would do everything in their power to defy, evade and discredit the law. From hating coercion they would pass inevitably to hatred even of the abstinence which is practised from the loftiest motives, and harden their hearts against the most earnest appeals of the best preachers of temperance.

Are we, then, to do nothing, are we to stand idly by while intemperance slays its thousands, earnest men and women may ask? Certainly not. We must be up and doing, but along right lines and not by exploded methods. Christians are surely not idle now. If we are not doing our best to raise the fallen, to inspire the doubting with faith and to save the lost, we are not Christ's disciples. True, we also have a duty to do as regards legislation. But my task at present is not to inquire what is the best liquor law for Canada, but to point out that prohibition would be the worst.

PRINCIPAL GRANT'S FOURTH LETTER.

In which he replies to his critics, and shows that Prohibition is not based on equity, but is class legislation of the worst kind.

(Special Correspondence of The Globe.)

My letters on prohibition have elicited replies the general nature of which may be judged by the remark of that unimpeachable authority, The Templar: "Many correspondents and many of our exchanges have attributed base motives to Dr. Grant." The imputation of motives throws little light on the subject, but much light on The Templar's correspondents and exchanges—if there is good foundation for the motto of the Order of the Garter. I also have received a great many letters, some of them from gentlemen, while others can only be described by saying that—compared with them—Dr. Carman's are models of literary style and Christian temper, and Bystander's worthy of the aged scholar. Reply to them, or even to Dr. Carman, or to the editor of The Farmers' Sun is impossible. Several of The Globe's correspondents, however, belong to a different class, and after concluding my course of letters to The Globe—now to be postponed, I may say, till the hurly-burly of the election is over—I shall do my best to answer them, readily admitting any weakness in the argument that may be shown, at the risk of forfeiting the admiration of The Templar, which "appreciates [most a good man who makes no mistakes." Do men who make no mistakes ever make anything? Are they not generally uncandid, cowardly, or poor, colorless creatures?

I must, however, not delay acknowledging that Mr. Frizzell has pointed out in his last letter a mistake which, though not affecting my main argument, is of some importance. From a pamphlet entitled "The Question of a Dominion Prohibitory Law," considered in its financial, moral, and religious aspects, by Wakefield Hardgrave, A.B., (Toronto: The Authors' Publishing Co., 1897), I gave the number of idiots, blind deaf and dumb in Maine, and in the Dominion; and I find now, thanks to Mr. Frizzell, that the table, not being based on similar data in the two cases, is worthless. The census returns, and what is known regarding the number of our idiots, seem to show that there are decidedly more, proportionately, in Maine than in Ontario, but as an exact comparison cannot be made I unreservedly withdraw that portion of my letter; just as one reverend gentleman will readily withdraw his statement that I was one of the minority who dissented from the finding of the last General Assembly, and another will withdraw his attack on me for not having expressed my views there instead of in the columns of The Globe, on learning that I was not in Winnipeg when the subject came before the House. As their general argument is not affected by the mistake, neither is mine; for the one point I am endeavoring to prove is that a Dominion prohibitory law would injure temperance and public and political morality.

I also admit, and indeed never dreamed of denying, that the General Assembly has passed resolutions in favor of prohibition, but whatever

respect may be demanded for such resolutions, their moral weight is greatly lessened by the fact that a majority of the men who have been called to the Moderator's chair since the Union have been on the other side, as well as the most distinguished of our laymen and clergymen, like the late Rev D. J. Macdonell, Dr. Milligan, Dr. Barclay, Dr. Thompson and others quite as representative of the best thought and work of the church as even its Moderators.

THE IOWA CONVENTION.

The object of the rest of this letter is to consider the fundamental question as to the duty of the State regarding the importation, manufacture, and sale of articles the excessive use of which is injurious. The declaration of the Iowa State Temperance Convention in 1855 that "the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor as a beverage is a crime per se" certainly does not settle the question. Indeed, how can rational or Christian men believe such an assertion? Is it innocent for men to use the juice of the grape in the autumn, but criminal to preserve it for winter use, after it passes through the natural process of fermentation into a condition in which it can be preserved? Logically, it would be as sensible to say that it is lawful to eat wheat, but not to eat it when baked into bread, because it has gone through the process of fermentation. If it is a sin or crime to sell a glass of wine it must be equally so to drink it, and if one party to the transaction is punished the other should be also. And if it is a crime to drink a glass it must be so to drink a mouthful, and, therefore, the countless millions who have obeyed the dying command of their Lord have been criminals! The conclusion is shocking, but there is no escape from it, if the Iowa principle be accepted and if logic counts for anything. Consistently, therefore, the Maine law forbids negatively the use of wine for sacramental purposes, for it allows it to be sold only for medicinal or mechanical purposes. All men have equal rights before the law, and to Mohammedans and Buddhists sacramental and beverage use would be the same, as well as a practice forbidden by their religion. Indeed, at the institution of the Supper the wine was used as a beverage and it is still so used, though in practice each communicant drinks only a small quantity,

Dismissing, then, the Iowa declaration as repugnant both to common sense and religion, do we find any firmer ground in the assertion that the law has as much right to forbid the sale of anything that intoxicates as it has to forbid murder, theft, arson or anything else that is wrong per se? This contention is as worthless as the other. The law cannot make that to be a crime which the reason and conscience of humanity refuses to consider a crime, without enlisting society in opposition to law. A little consideration will make it clear that, while laws against murder or theft are necessary to the existence of society, laws against the use of what may be abused are opposed to its highest good, that is, to the free development of society. "They are not skilful considerers of human things," says Milton, "who think to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all. And supposing we could expel sin by these means: look, how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue."

for the matter of both of them is the same; remove that and ye remove both alike. This justifies the high Providence of God, who, though He commends us temperance, yet pours out before us, even to profuseness, all desirable things."

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM.

The problem of how far the State may go in limiting the freedom of the individual for the sake of the general welfare is confessedly a difficult one, but that is not the problem here. How can the general welfare be prompted by limiting freedom and thereby, as Milton says, "abridging those means which are for the trial of virtue and the exercise of truth?" Surely the aim and method of a free society should correspond to the Divine method. The object of every worthy society should be to develop its citizens into more and more perfect freedom; and freedom, let it always be remembered, is not a power or gift which man has to begin with, but the goal, or end, to which the whole process of development is directed. Long ago it used to be thought the function of the State to protect grown men against themselves, on the plea that the State or the church, that is, in one word, somebody else, knew what was good for them better than they knew themselves. Thus the law in Spain prevented men from becoming Protestants and the law in Sweden prevented them from becoming Roman Catholics; the Puritan Parliament of England pronounced the punishment of death on all who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and Russia still punishes horribly the poor Stundists for not adhering to the Orthodox Church. All these prohibitory laws, too, met with a large measure of success, for in the old days law was enforced with uncompromising vigor, as it still is in Russia.

But even in those days they tried in vain to enforce prohibitory laws against the use of beer; and we thought that society had outgrown the notion that the way to develop men is to multiply laws and to enter personal liberty.

It is not the function of a free State to protect grown men against themselves. If men abuse their liberty to the injury of others, let them be duly punished and their own consciences will assent to this as righteous; or let them be cared for as weaklings and wise efforts made for their reformation. All that is right and within the function of the State, but it is not right when for the sake of criminals and weaklings the community is denied the natural opportunities of developing into the highest condition of freedom or self-realization. Individuals may, rather let us say ought to, deny themselves for the sake of criminals and weaklings. The more of such individuals a society has the more Christian it is, provided always that they do not become censorious and Pharisaical in their self-denial. Religion has a higher region than the State. The State punishes evil, while religion says to its votaries, "Overcome evil with good." The Christian principle is, "I will eat no meat rather than my weak brother should suffer." But if the State enacts, "No one shall eat meat lest the weak suffer," it becomes a despotism. It puts its trust in the policeman or the bayonet, and instead of making its people free citizens it makes them moral weaklings and hypocrites.

PROTECTION, NOT OPPRESSION.

But is not a framework of law necessary for the protection of society? Certainly, but it is needed for the protection, not for the oppression, of society; not for the good, who are under a higher law, but for the bad, as the apostle tells us. The State cannot add new commandments to the decalogue which Christianity has accepted as a summary of moral law. It may indeed invade the domain of personal rights as far as necessity demands, but when it moves in that direction it should move slowly, tentatively and not attempt more than it is reasonably sure of becoming able to enforce. Otherwise it will assuredly provoke resistance from men whose natural disposition is to honor and observe law. Just let Parliament try such an invasion of personal rights as a prohibitory law involves on cities like Toronto or Montreal, and there would be an explosion and a recoil against temperance which would astonish those who now talk glibly about the ease with which the law could be enforced. At present people are taking the matter coolly. They consider the discussion largely academical. Probably they will not think it worth their while to vote on the plebiscite. But attempt to put such a law in practice and the experience of astonished St. John in 1856 gives us an inkling of what would certainly happen in cities five or ten times its size.

NOT BASED ON EQUITY.

We are told that laws educate in the right direction. Not unless they are based on reason and on equity. Now, the reason of mankind has spoken emphatically against prohibition. Not one Christian country has tried it. States in the Union, a country with people always ready to blow themselves up with rash experiments, have adopted it in haste and the majority of these have repented already. Neither is it based on equity. It is essentially class legislation, and that always provokes hatred.

There are dangers enough already threatening society and our national welfare. Let us not add to them one that would in its effects on Canadian life be worse than any other, and, may I venture to say to my brethren in the ministry, do not countenance vile attacks on those who, at much cost to their own feelings, are warning their fellow-citizens of grave dangers into which they may fall through listening to their hearts rather than to their heads.

Kingston, Feb. 1.

G. M. GRANT.

